

**In the Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, the system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between the external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network, wherein the number of interconnections is dependent on a type of security mode.

2. (currently amended) The system according to claim 4 [1] wherein the first firewall has outer ports and the second firewall has inner ports, the outer ports of the first firewall having different port identifiers than the inner ports of the second firewall such that a progression of an unauthorized incoming data message that traverses an interconnection via one of the outer ports of the first firewall is blocked at the inner ports of the second firewall.

3. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, tie system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between the external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network. ~~The system according to claim 1 wherein the first firewall has ports and interconnections dedicated to supporting corresponding functions, such that the first firewall blocks a transmission of an incoming data message through the first firewall if the corresponding functions do not correspond to a function associated with a received port identifier of the data message does not coincide with a reference port identifier of an input port supporting a desired functionality of the server for processing the data message.~~

4. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, tie system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between the external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network, The system according to claim 1 wherein the first firewall includes a primary interconnection for supporting Hypertext Transfer Protocol traffic, a second interconnection dedicated to encrypted Hypertext Transfer Protocol traffic, a tertiary interconnection dedicated to monitoring a server, and a quaternary interconnection for monitoring operations and maintenance of the internal resource affiliated with the internal communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network.

5. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, tie system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between the external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network. ~~The system according to claim 1 wherein the second firewall the nonnegative integer number of interconnections interconnection~~ is only established for a limited duration on an as needed basis for communications between an internal resource of one business entity and another business entity.

6. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

7. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, the system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between the external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network. ~~The system according to claim 1 wherein the at least one interconnection of the first firewall is associated with a first port identifier, the nonnegative integer number of interconnections of the second firewall being associated with one or more second port identifiers, the at least one first port identifier being different from the one or more second port identifiers for each active interconnection.~~

8. (currently amended) The system according to claim [1] ~~4~~ wherein the second firewall blocks a communications message, where a user of the external communications network attempts to use a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

9. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the interconnection represents a communicative state in which communications flow through one of said firewalls and wherein a lack of an interconnection represents a blocked state in which communications are blocked from traversing through one of said firewalls.

10. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the nonnegative integer number of interconnections represents zero for a high security mode.

11. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the nonnegative integer number of interconnections represents a greater number or equal number to the at least one interconnection during a normal security mode.

12. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the external communications network comprises the Internet.

Claim 13 (canceled)

14. (currently amended) The system according to claim 16 [13] wherein a number of interconnections of the first firewall is less than or equal to the nonnegative integer number of interconnections of the second firewall.

Claim 15 (canceled)

16. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, the system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between an external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network, the first firewall having inner ports, ~~The system according to claim 13 wherein the first firewall~~

has inner ports associated with a primary interconnection, a secondary interconnection, a tertiary interconnection, and a quaternary interconnection, the primary interconnection supporting Hypertext Transfer Protocol traffic, the secondary interconnection dedicated to encrypted Hypertext Transfer Protocol traffic, the tertiary interconnection dedicated to monitoring a server, and the quaternary interconnection arranged for monitoring operations and maintenance of the internal resource affiliated with the internal communications network; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the internal communications network, the second firewall having different port identifiers than those of the first firewall.

17. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, the system comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between an external communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external communications network, the first firewall having inner ports; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the

internal communications network, the second firewall having different port identifiers than those  
of the first firewall, The system according to claim 13 wherein the second firewall has  
interconnections that are only established for a limited duration on an as needed basis for  
communications between an internal resource of one business entity and another business entity.

18. (currently amended) The system according to claim [13] 16 wherein first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

19. (currently amended) A system for providing electronic security for an internal  
resource capable of communicating via an external communications network, the system  
comprising:

a server having a first set of ports for communication between an external  
communications network and the server; the server having a second set of ports for  
communication between an internal communications network and the server;

a first firewall in communication with the first set of ports and interposed to  
provide at least one interconnection between the first set of ports and the external  
communications network, the first firewall having inner ports; and

a second firewall in communication with the second set of ports and interposed to  
provide a nonnegative integer number of interconnections between the first set of ports and the  
internal communications network, the second firewall having different port identifiers than those  
of the first firewall, The system according to claim 13 wherein the at least one interconnection of  
the first firewall is associated with a first port identifier, the nonnegative integer number of  
interconnections of the second firewall being associated with one or more second port identifiers,

the ~~at least one~~ first port identifier being different from the one or more second port identifiers for each active interconnection.

20. (currently amended) The system according to claim [13] 16 wherein the second firewall blocks a data message from traversing the second firewall, where the user attempts to use a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

Claims 21-29 (canceled)

30. (new) The system according to claim 1 wherein the nonnegative integer number of interconnections represents a number less than an amount of the at least one interconnection during a high security mode.

31. (new) The system according to claim 11 wherein the nonnegative integer number of interconnections represents a number less than an amount of the at least one interconnection during a high security mode.

32. (new) The system according to claim 3 wherein the first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

33. (new) The system according to claim 3 wherein the interconnection represents a communicative state in which communications flow through one of said firewalls and wherein a lack of an interconnection represents a blocked state in which communications are blocked from traversing through one of said firewalls.

34. (currently amended) The system according to claim 3 wherein the nonnegative integer number of interconnections represents zero for a high security mode.

35. (new) The system according to claim 3 wherein the external communications network comprises the Internet.

36. (new) The system according to claim 4 wherein the first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

37. (new) The system according to claim 4 wherein the interconnection represents a communicative state in which communications flow through one of said firewalls and wherein a lack of an interconnection represents a blocked state in which communications are blocked from traversing through one of said firewalls.

38. (new) The system according to claim 4 wherein the external communications network comprises the Internet.

39. (new) The system according to claim 5 wherein the first firewall has outer ports and the second firewall has inner ports, the outer ports of the first firewall having different port identifiers than the inner ports of the second firewall such that a progression of an unauthorized incoming data message that traverses an interconnection via one of the outer ports of the first firewall is blocked at the inner ports of the second firewall.

40. (new) The system according to claim 5 wherein the second firewall blocks a communications message, where a user of the external communications network attempts to use

a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

41. (new) The system according to claim 5 wherein the first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

42. (new) The system according to claim 5 wherein the interconnection represents a communicative state in which communications flow through one of said firewalls and wherein a lack of an interconnection represents a blocked state in which communications are blocked from traversing through one of said firewalls.

43. (new) The system according to claim 5 wherein the external communications network comprises the Internet.

44. (new) The system according to claim 7 wherein the first firewall has outer ports and the second firewall has inner ports, the outer ports of the first firewall having different port identifiers than the inner ports of the second firewall such that a progression of an unauthorized incoming data message that traverses an interconnection via one of the outer ports of the first firewall is blocked at the inner ports of the second firewall.

45. (new) The system according to claim 7 wherein the second firewall blocks a communications message, where a user of the external communications network attempts to use a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

46. (new) The system according to claim 7 wherein the first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

47. (new) The system according to claim 7 wherein the interconnection represents a communicative state in which communications flow through one of said firewalls and wherein a lack of an interconnection represents a blocked state in which communications are blocked from traversing through one of said firewalls.

48. (new) The system according to claim 7 wherein the external communications network comprises the Internet.

49. (new) The system according to claim 17 wherein a number of interconnections of the first firewall is less than or equal to the nonnegative integer number of interconnections of the second firewall.

50. (new) The system according to claim 17 wherein first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

51. (new) The system according to claim 17 wherein the second firewall blocks a data message from traversing the second firewall, where the user attempts to use a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

52. (new) The system according to claim 19 wherein a number of interconnections of the first firewall is less than or equal to the nonnegative integer number of interconnections of the second firewall.

53. (new) The system according to claim 19 wherein first firewall and the second firewall comprise software instructions for execution by the server.

54. (new) The system according to claim 19 wherein the second firewall blocks a data message from traversing the second firewall, where the user attempts to use a first port identifier associated with an interconnection of the first firewall to penetrate the second firewall having a second port identifier distinct from the first port identifier.

55. (new) A method for providing security for an electronic transaction between entities over a communications network, the method comprising:

sending a data message containing an electronic transaction from a first entity to an input port associated with a plurality of firewalls, wherein said input port is interconnected to a nonnegative number of interconnections;

determining a security mode; and  
selecting the nonnegative number of interconnections based on said determined security mode.

56. (new) A method for providing security for an electronic transaction between entities over a communications network, the method comprising:

sending a data message containing an electronic transaction from a first entity to an input port associated with a firewall that has interconnections, wherein said port and interconnections are dedicated to support corresponding functions; and

blocking said data message if said corresponding functions do not correspond to a function for processing said data message.